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Baptists. Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Association, 1781.

Minutes of the ... Association, in M.DCC.LXXI.

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Bapt. of Pennsylv. Philadelphia Association.

MINUTES

OF THE

PHILADELPHIAN

BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

IN M.DCC.LXXXI.

PHILADELPHIA, October 23, 1781.

At three o'clock, P. M. the Association was opened with a suitable discourse from 2 Cor. xi. 22-----28. By Brother JOHN BLACKWELL.

2. After sermon Brother SAMUEL JONES was elected Moderator, and Brother THOMAS FLEESON, Clerk. Letters from 26 churches were read.

N. B. The ministers names marked with an * not present. Dashes denote Churches destitute of a settled minister.

Churches.	Ministers.	Bap- tized.	Rec. by L.	Re- stor	Dif- fis.	Ex- coms	Dead	Mem- bers.
Pennepeck.	Samuel Jones,	2	2	0	0	0	1	58
Middletown.	Abel Morgan,	1	0	0	0	0	0	95
Cohansey.	* Robert Kelsay,	25	1	0	0	0	3	81
Great Valley.	Thomas Jones,	0	0	0	0	0	1	35
Cape May.	David Smith,	13	0	0	0	0	0	58
Hopewell.	Oliver Hart,	0	0	0	2	1	3	213
Brandiwine.	Abel Griffiths,	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Kingwood.	David Sutton,	1	1	0	1	0	1	69
Southampton.	William Van Horne,	1	0	0	0	1	2	56
Philadelphia.	-----	7	0	0	0	0	0	86
Cranberry.	Peter Willson,	3	0	0	0	0	0	37
Knowlton.	-----	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
New Britain.	Joshua Jones,	2	0	0	0	0	0	30
Salem.	-----	18	0	0	0	0	1	34
Newtown.	Nicholas Cox,	2	0	1	0	1	0	68
Dividing Creek.	Peter P. Van Horne,	37	0	1	2	0	2	65

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Churches.	Ministers.	Bap- tized.	Rec. by L.	Re- stor	Dif- mis.	Ex- com	Dead	Mem- bers.
New Mills.	David Loofborrow,	0	0	0	0	0	0	56
Conoloway.	*Joseph Powell,	4	0	0	0	0	0	42
Upper Freehold.	-----	2	1	0	1	0	0	66
Mount Bethel.	Abner Sutton,	0	0	0	3	0	1	22
Pittsgrove.	William Worth,	34	0	0	0	0	4	70
Tuckahoe.	-----	11	0	0	0	0	0	34
Stamford.	-----	16	3	0	4	2	5	39
Amenia Precinct.	Elkana Holmes,	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
London Tract.	Thomas Fleeson,	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
Cow Marth.	-----	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
Total.		179	8	2	13	5	24	1435

The three last mentioned churches being lately constituted, were, at their request, received into fellowship.

* * * As no letters came to hand from *Piscatawa, Welsh-Tract, Montgomery, Scotch Plains,* and several other churches belonging to this Association, we are unable to give any just account of their present number of members; a satisfaction we hope to enjoy another season.

3. A letter and minutes from the *Warren Association*, which met at South Brimfield in September last, were read. Their messengers to us were President MANNING, and Brother WILLIAM ROGERS.

WEDNESDAY, October 24.

Met pursuant to adjournment at nine o'clock, A. M.

4. A special report in writing, relative to the association-library, was presented by Brother WILLIAM VAN HORNE---Ordered, that this be left among our papers.---Our Brethren SAMUEL JONES and JOSHUA JONES, with the Librarian, are requested to examine all the books, distinguish, by some mark, those appertaining to the library, take into consideration the expediency of repairing the bindings, and make their report at our next annual meeting.

5. Our Brethren Samuel Jones, Oliver Hart, Abel Morgan and James Manning, were appointed a committee to take into consideration the proposals and queries offered by Pennepack, Hopewell and Philadelphia churches, and report thereon in the afternoon.

6. The

James Manning, Secy.
Jan. 2, 1934

6. The church of Stamford having excommunicated *Robert Morris*, their late Preacher, for gross immoralities, and departure from the faith as held by us, we think proper to notify the churches, that they may beware of him.

7. Brother *Blackwell* was requested to draw up an advertisement informing the public, that DAVID BRANSON, who imposes on them under the character of a Baptist Preacher, is an *excommunicated person*, and ought not by any means to be countenanced.---The advertisement being brought in, was read; and, after some amendment, approved of---Ordered to be inserted in one of the Philadelphia news-papers.

P. M. Half after two o'clock.

8. The committee appointed to consider the proposals and queries from Pennepack, Hopewell and Philadelphia churches, respecting the doctrine of "universal restoration," and the proceedings of the Philadelphia church on that affair, do report:

1. That the proceedings of the protesters in that business, were regular and fair.

2. That the declaration of the ministers who were called to their assistance, respecting the protesters, was weighty, full and decisive.

3. That although the *non-signers* are already *virtually* excluded, yet, in order to their more formal excommunication, the Philadelphia church be *advised* to appoint at their meeting of business, two of their regular male members to go with the *protest* to the *non-protesters*, one by one, in order to their signing it, and warn them, that *in case they refuse to sign*, they should openly and formally by name be excommunicated.

*Samuel Jones, Abel Morgan,
Oliver Hart, James Manning.*

Resolved UNANIMOUSLY, That the above report of the committee is approved; and that this association advise ALL the churches to beware of ELHANAN WINCHESTER, and not admit HIM, or any who advocate "universal salvation," to the office of public teaching, or suffer any, who avow the same, to continue in their communion.

9. Brother *Oliver Hart* was appointed to write a letter, in order to be forwarded to the next Warren association; and our Brethren *Abel Griffith, William Rogers, Elkanah Holmes* and *Nicholas Cox*, were chosen messengers.

10. Brother

10. Brother *William Rogers* was requested to write to the next Virginia association; and our Brethren *Thomas Fleson* and *Philip Hughes* were appointed messengers.

THURSDAY, *October 25, 1781.*

Met at sun-rise.

11. The general letter to the churches, drawn by Brother *Samuel Jones*, being read, was approved of; and Brother *Oliver Hart* was nominated to write one for next year. Subject---CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.

12. The supplies granted for destitute churches, are as follow:
- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Knowlton. | { | Brother David Sutton, 2d Lord's day in November. |
| | | Brother Nicholas Cox, 4th ditto in January. |
| | | Brother Abner Sutton, 3d ditto in May and August. |
| | | Brother Benjamin Coles, 4th ditto in May. |
| Tuckahoe. | { | Brother David Smith, 3d Lord's day in November, ditto in May. |
| | | Brother William Worth, 1st ditto in March. |
| | | Brother Peter P. Van Horne, 5th ditto in each month. |
| Cow Marsh. | { | Brother David Loofborrow, 2d Lord's day in December. |
| | | Brother Abel Griffith, 5th ditto in December, and 4th in April. |
| Upper-Freehold. | { | Brother B. Coles, 4th Lord's day in Nov. Dec. and February. |
| | | Brother Loofborrow, 1st ditto in April. |
| | | Brother Abner Sutton, 3d ditto in April. |
| | { | Brother Joshua Jones, 3d ditto in May. |

13. Voted, that the next Association be held at Philadelphia, to begin on Tuesday after the third Lord's day in October, at three o'clock, P. M. Introductory sermon by Brother *Nicholas Cox*; in case of failure, by Brother *Abel Morgan*.

14. And now, dear Brethren, having come to a close of our annual meeting, before we address you by our circular letter, we feel ourselves constrained to acknowledge the great goodness of God towards us, and to call on you to join with us in thankfulness and praise, as well for the unanimity and brotherly love which prevailed throughout our meeting, as for the *recent, signal success* granted to the American arms, in the surrender of the whole British army under the command of Lord Cornwallis, with the effusion of so little blood.

THE GENERAL LETTER.

The ELDERS and MESSENGERS of the several CHURCHES met in Association,
at Philadelphia, October 23, 1781:

To the several CHURCHES in Union with this ASSOCIATION:

SEND GREETING.

Dearlly Beloved in the Lord!

IN the connection of divine truth, and progress of our order, we come to write to you in the next place, of what, in our Confession of Faith, chap. 7th, is called God's Covenant; by which is meant, The transactions of God, with and towards man, respecting his duty and happiness: more especially, the exertions of infinite wisdom and mercy, in the contrivance and establishment of the scheme of redemption, for the recovery and salvation of lost man, through a precious and blessed Mediator.

Passing over the prohibition to Adam, respecting the forbidden fruit, which is commonly called the covenant of works, his being the public head and representative of his posterity, as he certainly was, Rom. v. 12---We come to the intimation made to him immediately after the fall, respecting the seed of the woman, that it should bruise the serpent's head; upon which is founded the notion of the covenant of grace made with Adam, which was nothing else than a bare discovery, revelation and manifestation of the eternal counsel of God, respecting man's recovery, carrying in it a promise of eternal life. No stipulations and re-stipulations, no conditions whatever; nothing more nor less to be performed on Adam's part; nothing but a glorious manifestation, as was said before, of the rich grace and mercy of God in Christ: And the farther discovery of this rich grace, that was made to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was exactly of the same tenor; a promise, that in their seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed: Gen. 12, 3, 26, 4, 28, 14. Not a word of a covenant, or any conditions. Hence in the new Testament, where reference is had thereunto, the same language is constantly used. As for instance; For the promise is unto you and your Children, Acts ii. 39. Of this man's seed has God, according to his promise, Acts xiii. 23. For the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, Acts xxvi. 6. Heirs according to the promise, Gal. iii. 21, 22, 29. The promise of eternal inheritance, Heb. ix. 19. To perform the mercy promised, Luke i. 72. And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life, 1 John ii. 29. For all the promises of God in him, are not yea and nay, if you will and if

not, in the strain of a covenant, but yea and Amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. In like manner we read of gifts: If thou knewest the gift of God, John iv. 10. Free gift, Rom. v. 15--18. Unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. Gave gifts unto men, Eph. iv. 8. Hence also the administrations of grace are called the old and new Testament, because a testament contains free gifts and legacies made over, and intured to the heirs. It is true we read in Is. lix. 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them. And in Jer. xxxi. 31--34. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; speaking of the gospel day. With respect to which we observe: First, That in these places you see nothing that looks like a covenant. Secondly, That the word covenant in the old Testament, sometimes means a statute, ordinance, establishment, appointment and decree: as in Jer. xxxiii. 2. Gen. ix. 9--11. Numb. xviii. 19. Thirdly, That the use of the word covenant might be more consonant with that legal dispensation, than that of a testament. Fourthly and lastly, That it might seem odd to speak of a testament, while the testator was yet living, as the Apostle hints, Heb. ix. 15, 16. But when our Saviour was about to lay down his life, and considered himself as already dead, he lays aside the use of the word covenant, and takes up the more proper word testament, saying, This is the new testamenet in my blood, Matt. xxvi. 28. and ever afterward, the word testament was constantly used, when reference is had to the dispensations of grace, as you may see in the margin of your bibles. And besides, when we consider the nature of a covenant, we clearly see there could be no possible room for such a thing ever to exist between God and man, respecting spiritual things. For the idea of a covenant necessarily includes these things following: 1. Mutual wants in the parties covenanting. 2. Mutual benefits enjoyed by them. 3. Power in each party to perform the conditions of the covenant. 4. Each party is brought under obligations to the other, by the performance of those conditions. 5. Merit on both sides. 6. And lastly, Neither party ought to be under prior obligations to the other, respecting the conditions of the covenant; of which particulars not one can be admitted in the present case.

As for the Abrahamick covenant, as some call it, it only respected temporal things, and the externals of religion, though it had the promise of the Messiah tacked to it, and was therefore called the covenant of promise, Eph. ii. 12. It was with regard to selecting Abraham and his descendants from the other nations of the earth to a national church state, and the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, the peaceable and quiet possession of which they were to enjoy, upon condition of their observing the external rituals of that dispensation, and being obedient,

obedient, which they promised, and had in their power to do. And this was the covenant, of which they received circumcision, an external mark or token, as a seal to confirm it, Gen. xii. 13, 17, 7, 8, 26, 4, 28, 14. Exod. xix. 3---9. xxiv. 3---8. Lev. xxvi. 3, 40. Deut. 5, 29. The word covenant seems to have been introduced into the christian system of religion, because it favoured of a legal strain, so acceptable to those, who are fond of terms and conditions to be performed by man: while others, that do not favour legalism, yet too incautiously make use of the word covenant, in bare compliance with custom; though these are generally careful to inform us, that it means a testamentary covenant, a free, absolute, unconditional covenant, which is much the same thing as to say, that it is no covenant at all.

The sum then is this, That the glorious dispensations and manifestations of the rich grace and mercy of God in Christ, contain free, absolute, and unconditional promises of the free, rich, and unmerited gifts of God, conveyed to the heirs as legacies, in a testamentary way.

Having thus shewn you, dear Brethren, that there can be no such thing as a covenant between God and man, respecting spiritual blessings and service, we come now to consider what foundation there is to stile the glorious transactions between the persons of the ever blessed Trinity, respecting man's recovery, a covenant: and here undoubtedly, there is some appearance of that kind. If ever there was a covenant of grace, this is it. If ever there was a covenant of redemption, here you will find it. And, on the part of Christ, a covenant of works too; soasmuch as the great work of redemption, the fulfilling of the law of God, in behalf of his people, for whom he undertook as their surety, was performed by him, Ps. cxix. 122. Is. xxxviii. 14.

The passages of Scripture, that speak of this glorious transaction as a covenant, are these following: And my covenant shall stand fast with him, Ps. lxxxix. 28. And give thee for a covenant of the people, Is. xlii. 6, 49, 8. Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, Is. lvi. 4, 6. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, Zech. ix. 11. Even the messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1.-----But then, it is spoken of under other views, in these that follow: According to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. iii. 11. And the counsel of peace shall be between them both, Zech. vi. 13. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, Acts xx. 27. The immutability of his counsel, Heb. vi. 17. Being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts ii. 23.----And besides, Christ is said to be fore-ordained to that work, 1 Pet. i. 20. Sent, John x. 36. To have received a commandment, John x. 18. Was therefore a servant, Is. xlii. 1. Cheerfully obeyed, Ps. xl. 7, 8. And was rewarded, Ps. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 9.--From the whole then we see, That there was a counsel held in eternity, even from everlasting, respecting the recovery of man; that the Triune God did then contrive, find out, adjust and settle, speaking after the manner of men, the whole plan and scheme of that great and glorious work; who should be saved, by what means, and after what manner: that the son of God, the second person in the Trinity, should be a mediator, should undertake for his chosen ones as their surety, and should assume human nature, that he might make satisfaction to divine justice in their behalf; that all the gifts and graces necessary for the purpose, should be treasured in him, Col. i. 19. That the blessed spirit should co-operate in manifesting the whole to the world, and applying the same to the chosen ones, namely, by enlightening their darkened understandings, working in them faith and repentance,
changing

changing their vile affections, converting them from the service of sin and Satan, to the service of the living God, carrying on the work of grace begun, and keeping them by the power of God unto salvation; by every means making them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and finally bringing them to the full possession of it.

Thus, dear Brethren, we have briefly laid before you the plan of our redemption; as concerted in eternity, and brought into effect in time. You see the glorious covenant of grace, which was well ordered in all things, and sure. You see the son of God appointed to the mediatorial work, and all grace treasured up in him for that purpose. You see him undertake, go through with it, and the spirit co-operate to accomplish the whole. You see the dispensations of grace to man are free, absolute and unconditional; the gifts of God dispersed in a testamentary way, free and firm. Nothing of works, but all of grace. Nothing of the will of man, but all of the will of God; that we might all, and at all times, cry grace, grace, and whosoever glorieth, might glory in the Lord.

O blessed and glorious scheme! What a rich display have we here of the wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, mercy, pity, compassion, and condescension of God! See the harmony of the divine attributes in this stupendous plan, that is every way worthy of a God! What shall we render unto him for such a rich, unmerited grace! Never to the endless ages of eternity, never shall we be able to render adequate compensation. O that the love of God were abundantly shed abroad in each of our hearts, that we might for ever admire, with astonishment admire his rich grace; that we might for ever love, fear, honour, reverence, and serve him, with all our hearts unfeignedly.

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

By Order of the Association,

SAMUEL JONES, *Moderator.*

THOMAS FLEESON, *Clerk.*

PRINTED BY R. AITKEN, IN MARKET-STREET.

Just published and to be sold by R. AITKEN, Bookseller, in Market-street,
near the Coffee-house,

A CONFESSION OF FAITH, put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations of Christians, (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) adopted by the Baptist Association of Philadelphia: To which are added, Two Articles, viz. Of Imposition of Hands, and Singing of Psalms in public Worship; also, A short Treatise of Church Discipline ---- The Baptist shorter Catechism, with Scripture Citations ---- Address to the Baptist Churches, relative to the Apostacy of Elhanan Winchester ---- Watts's Psalms -- Ditto's Songs for Children -- The Mourner, or, The Afflicted Relieved -- Janeway's Token for Children -- Oeconomy of Human Life, &c. &c.